

# **AGRICULTURAL QUARANTINE INSPECTION (AQI) - USER FEES**

## **PROGRAM PROFILE**

<b>Goal</b>	To maintain the risk of introduction of invasive species into the U.S. at acceptable levels to protect American agricultural resources, maintain the marketability of agricultural products, and facilitate the movement of people and commodities across the borders.
<b>Enabling Legislation</b>	AQI user fee collection is authorized by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade (FACT) Act of 1990, P.L. No. 101-624, Sect. © 2509, 104 Stat. 4069-4073 (1990); as amended by section 504 of the 1996 Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act (Pub. L. 104-127) on April 4, 1996. PL 87-46 (civil penalties).
<b>Economic Significance</b>	Protects the multi-billion dollar U.S. agricultural industry. Intercepts many of the world's most destructive pests and diseases. Tons of meat products from countries infected with FMD, African swine fever, and hog cholera are intercepted in baggage each year.
<b>Principal Approach And Methods</b>	<p>APHIS collects user fees for AQI services associated with the arrival at a port in the customs territory of the U.S. of commercial vessels, trucks, railcars, and aircraft, as well as international airline passengers. Fees are also collected for preclearance or preinspection at sites outside the U.S. customs territory. We do not charge fees for inspections in U.S. territories or bordering countries.</p> <p>Our fees also cover costs associated with administering the user fee program and maintaining a reasonable balance in the AQI User Fee Reserve Account. Fee collections are deposited into a Treasury account and reimbursement is controlled by spending limitations imposed through the congressional appropriations process. Appropriations can limit activity when the demand for user fee services is expanding.</p> <p>Currently, all AQI fee collections over \$100 million are available to APHIS without further appropriation. Any funding shortfall between the appropriated amount and the \$100 million collections threshold must be funded from the AQI reserve account. In FY 2003, all AQI user</p>

fee collections become available without the need for annual appropriations and spending limits would be determined by the demand for AQI services.

## History

Since the AQI program began in 1913, the volume of cargo and air passenger traffic entering the U.S. has increased dramatically, due to the global economy and free trade agreements. APHIS began charging AQI user fees in May 1991. Since then, we have collected approximately \$970 million. In FY 1999, we collected approximately \$172 million. Periodically, we adjust the fees to recover our costs and meet the constantly increasing demand for inspection services. We implemented the latest fee increases on January 1, 2000.

## State and Local Cooperation

Many States cooperate in carrying out various AQI program functions, particularly export certification.

## Involvement of Other Agencies

Customs, Department of Defense, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service assist in inspection.

RESOURCE DATA						
Fiscal Year	Cash Collections	Obligations	Unavailable Reserve	Balance	Reimbursements*	SYs
1997	115,218,453	130,937,886	2,000,000	17,785,662	17,086,486	1,987
1998	150,804,661	140,094,753	13,829,975	14,665,595	18,158,648	2,000
1999	171,904,404	152,232,527	25,829,975	22,337,472	17,464,193	2,025
2000 (est)	188,000,000	194,607,291	38,829,975	2,506,857	17,500,000	2,308
2001 (est)	214,822,796	204,229,369	38,829,975	13,100,284	17,500,000	2,569
			APHIS	Cooperators*	Total Obligations	
		Cumulative	920,800,342	114,223,891	1,035,024,233	

\* Reimbursements include phytosanitary reimbursements and reimbursable overtime. Cooperator dollars represents the amount of cooperator funds contributed to all AQI activities -- both appropriated and user fee.

## **RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR AQI APPROPRIATED AND USER FEE**

### **Passenger Inspections**

In FY 1999, APHIS inspected approximately 83 million passengers/pedestrians arriving in the United States, and predeparture and preclearance passengers in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and abroad. This is an increase of 7 million from FY 1998 and passenger arrivals will continue increasing. To address this increased traffic, APHIS opened two new, full-scale facilities on the U.S./Mexico border to conduct cargo, passenger, and pedestrian inspections.

To enhance passenger processing, we participated in a Border Passenger Processing Initiative. This initiative examines ways to expedite passenger processing while maintaining or increasing regulatory compliance. In FY 1999, we focused on improving customer service through compliance education and stakeholders meetings to increase awareness.

APHIS continued participating in Passenger Analytical Units, which target high-risk passengers. Also, we established dedicated commuter lanes at land border ports-of-entry on the northern and southern borders to accommodate frequent travelers between the U.S. and Mexico or Canada. As a result of these and other improvements, we have reduced the program's passenger clearance target to 20 minutes. In July 1999, the Consular Affairs of the State Department, Customs, Immigration, and APHIS signed the Border Agency Partnership (BAP). The BAP enhances border security through more seamless processing.

### **Baggage Screening**

APHIS maintained 59 trained beagle teams at 23 major U.S. airports and post offices. Also, we maintained x-ray scanning equipment for passenger baggage clearance at all foreign-arrival and predeparture sites, and at several land border ports on the Mexican border. Also, the Agency continued working with the U.S. Army to develop x-ray technology which can detect agricultural products based on atomic makeup and shape using neural network software. Also, APHIS worked with Vivid Technologies, Inc. to improve x-ray detection technology and enhance our automated baggage inspection systems.

**Cargo Clearance**

In FY 1999, APHIS inspected 70,968 ships and 837,931 cargo shipments entering the United States. Also, the Agency participated in the Automated Commercial System for the electronic transmission of cargo data to expedite processing of airport data. APHIS maintained electronic equipment at 33 maritime locations and 26 airports. Also, we continued to expand and improve an automated hold system for regulated cargo. APHIS continued working with Customs on the Automatic Targeting System. This system uses artificial intelligence techniques to rank shipments for inspection, facilitates trade by expediting tracking and enforcement of regulated commodities.

**Results Monitoring**

In FY 1999, APHIS instituted the AQI Monitoring System, which provides data on passenger baggage inspection. This system enables program managers to allocate resources to entry paths at high-risk for foreign agricultural items.

**Export Certification**

APHIS uses the EXCERPT system to facilitate export trade by providing certifying officials with export summaries which provide information for issuing phytosanitary certificates. In FY 1999, we expanded the system to include summaries for 4 new countries, increasing the total number of countries for which export certification data is available to 225.

**Preclearance**

In FY 1999, APHIS precleared 2,915,217 passengers and intercepted 73,061 pieces of contraband at the Bahamas and Bermuda airports. APHIS conducted preclearance inspections of fruits, vegetables, and propagative material in 28 countries.

**Regulatory Enforcement**

In FY 1999, APHIS conducted smuggling interdiction inspections and blitz activities at airports, seaports, land borders, and weigh stations. Also, we increased surveys of U.S. produce markets for prohibited products.

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